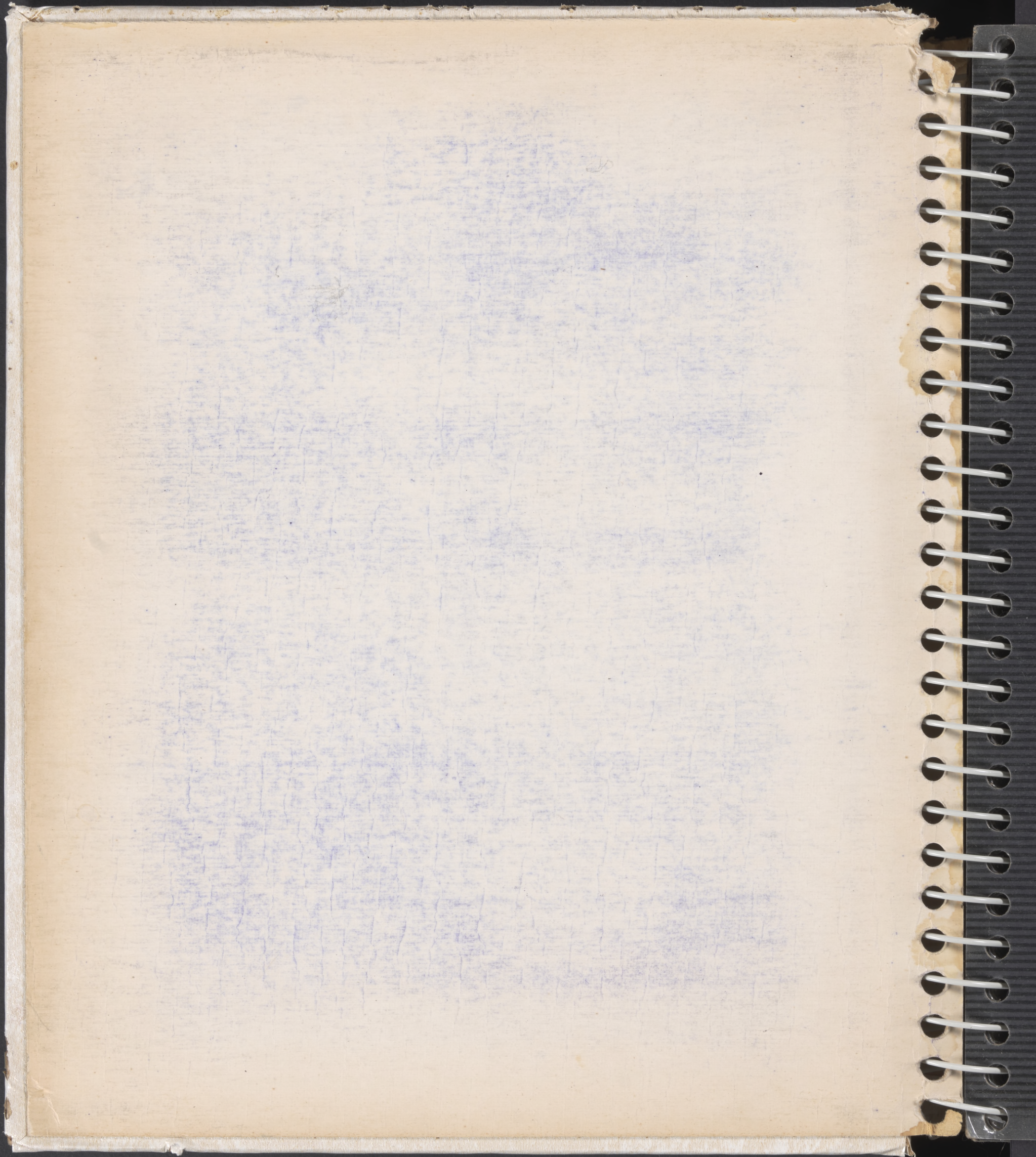


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LE THEATRE LESBIEN



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THE

DECEMBER 1972

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LESBIAN TIDE

A FEMINIST PUBLICATION, WRITTEN BY AND FOR THE RISING TIDE OF WOMEN TODAY.



THE VICTORIAN AFFAIR

OR

PRINCE ALBERT'S LAST FUCK

Queen Victoria and lover at Gay Women's Theatre in Sacramento

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THE HOMOBONTOSAURUS



C&HOPNIX

Tuesday,
December 12, 1972
California State University,
Sacramento

Volume 26
Number 37

Lesbians Present Drama, Poetry to Close Colloquium



DYKES ON THE HIGH SEAS





ROBIN SCREW

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THE PSYCHOANALYSIS OF EDWARD THE DYKE

DRAGNET

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DYKES ON PARADE





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Lesbian Show Of 'Herstory' Is Gay Event

By CHERYL CLARK
Bee Staff Writer

A group of Sacramento lesbians is throwing a fashion show this weekend, and you can bet it won't be an ordinary display of haute couture.

It's called "Dykes on Parade," a show these gay women are billing as an "hersterical, herstorical, theatrical revue of lesbian fashion."

And yes, it's all legitimate. The women, most of them college students or would-be professional thespians and musicians, have performed about a dozen times in the last several years in Northern California. They bill themselves as the first gay women's acting troupe, "Le Theatre Lesbien."

Their purpose, they say, is to present the lesbian as a positive model. And also to spoof the gay community just a bit.

They have taken their characters from pages of somewhat obscure history (they call it "herstory") books because, said Mattie Oneperson, one of the revue's organizers, "gay women have been left out of regular textbooks." They also have gleaned gay personalities from articles in Ms. magazine and lesbian journals. They have studied their women thoroughly, they said, sewn costumes appropriate to the time period and attempted to present their characters as real people.

Promenading in costume on the Sacramento City College auditorium stage Saturday and Sunday evenings, about 15 women will present their renditions of about 35 lesbian stars.

They will include: the Amazons of legend; Sappho, whose collective lived on the island of Lesbos; the swashbuckling pirate duo Anne Bonny and Mary Reed who terrorized the seas in the 1700s; and the Swedish Queen Christina, described as "herstory's first true queen in drag."

There also will be Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas; Quaquam, a female Blackfoot warrior, Parisian novelist Collette and French poet Renee Vivian.

But just as the troupe members are recreating gay women of the past in costume and dialogue, they are satirizing gay women of the present.

"There are many different types of dykes," said Cherie Gordon, another of the troupe's organizers. Their stereotyped sapphics include "Rosie the Riveter," dressed in grime-splattered overalls and "the 1950s bar dyke," "the 1960s gym teacher" and a quartet of military lesbians called Sargeant Sappho, Lieutenant Lesbos, Dyke Commando and Camp Alice, who sport full dress uniforms, arm patches and purple hearts.

Admission for the show is \$1 for children and \$2 for adults. Curtain

'Dykes on Parade' show rates standing ovation

By Chrisstian-Saunders-Price III

The student lounge was the setting Saturday and Sunday evenings for the "herstorical" event of the season, the theatrical presentation of "Dykes on Parade," performed by the first all gay women's acting troupe.

This extraordinary show delving into Lesbian culture and times played to a full house both nights and brought a five-minute standing ovation at the final curtain.

The purpose of this presentation was to parallel the historical lesbian as a positive model to the present day society and also bring the gay community to certain realizations about its past.

The women of this troupe, most of them college students and would-be professional thespians and musicians, have performed about a dozen times in the last several years in Northern California. And it's very apparent they have studied their women thoroughly.

Dressed in period costumes, they acted out sketches about such great lesbian stars as the Amazons of ancient lore; Sappho, whose collective lived on the Island of Lesbos; the swashbuckling pirate duo, Anne Bonny and Mary Reed, who terrorized the seas in the 1700s; and the Swedish Queen Christina, described as "herstory's first true queen in drag."

Also portrayed were Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas; Qua'quam, a female Blackfoot warrior; Parisian novelist Collette and the French poet Renee Vivian.

"Dykes on Parade," though somewhat controversial, definitely gives insight into some of the great women of our time and, while the satirical basis of the lyrics and the songs gave the audience something to laugh out loud about, it also gave them a great deal of interesting information to think about after the play was over.



SWASHBUCKLING DUO — Mary Elva Koulis (left) and Aron Morgan portray Anne Bonny and Mary Reed, the pirate duo that conquered the ocean waves in the 1700's.

Historical 'Dyke' fashions revued

By Kathleen Jordan
Staff Writer

Sacramento has a partially deserved, partially distorted reputation as a slow, unexciting city where people live because it's centrally located. It means that if Sacramentans want some action, some excitement, they have to drive to San Francisco for it.

But last Saturday night proved that bright lights and good entertainment are not 200 miles away. A packed audience at the Sacramento City College student lounge viewed a completely original, innovative show called **Dykes On Parade**. It is a funny, witty and satirical lesbian fashion revue of historical women produced by lesbians. According to its director, Matrisha One Person, they have geared the show for a mixed audience because "it's a good way to educate the public about the history and existence of women."

The revue proved overwhelmingly that a committed political group can and does have a sense of humor. By laughing at themselves first, others could laugh with them, and the show ended with a mighty applause, a standing ovation, and cries of "author, author."

Presented by a local troupe called "Le Theatre Lesbien," and produced by a CSUS art student Matrisha One Person, the show (using a fashion show format) was a satirical revue of lesbians throughout history. It's also a parody on 1970 lesbian "types" that ended with a futuristic army of lesbians led by Sgt. Sappho, Lt. Lesbos, and Camp Alice, the dyke - youth rec-

ruiting officer.

Beginning the show was the legendary Amazon, brazenly waving her cross - bow and battle - ax. A purple - gowned Sappho danced on next as the narrator, Ebet, stated that "Sappho

The most popular characters of the evening were Colette, who enthusiastically danced on stage in a black tuxedo, wild frizzy wig, and tomato - red lips; and the "steamship set", which included author Radclyffe

the audience and slow - danced with her.

The second half of the show consisted of different 1970 lesbian types, such as the counter - culture dyke, the political dyke ("who flits from caucus to caucus"), tuxedoed after - hour dykes ("chic will always be chic"), and a hilarious rendition of straight people's vision of dykes (the fruit, fairy and freak). The show ended with a future army of lesbians who sang to a hand - clapping audience, "Be kind to your lesbian friends, for a dyke may be somebody's mother . . ."

Le Theatre Lesbien emerged as a group in 1972 after first informally performing plays for fun at parties, then moving their act to gay bars, and then playing at a gay conference and a lesbian conference. Growing ever - larger as a group, they began performing on the stage with their own written plays such as "Robin Screw," "Victorian Affair or Prince Albert's Last Fuck," and "From Lesbos to Homophobia." After a one - year hiatus, Le Theatre Lesbien first performed **Dykes On Parade** in June, 1976 at CSUS Playwrights Theatre, and then again in San Francisco.

Entertainment

and her sisters dwelled on the island of Lesbos where they ate grapes, scribbled poetry, and had affairs with one another."

There were some obscure historical lesbians, such as the two lesbian pirates Anne Bonny and Mary Reed, Queen Christina of Switzerland, ("Balls, balls, said the queen; if I had two, I'd be king"); QuaQuan, the "first native - American con - artist," and Renee Vivien, poet, who "adopted an outlandish lifestyle that endeared her to degenerates the world over."

Hall, Una Lady Troubridge, the legendary Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, who "made brownies whenever Picasso came for tea."

Creating the biggest uproar of the evening was the 1950's Bar Dyke (played by Myrene McClaskey) who looked tough and butch as she sauntered across stage in her classic dyke outfit of Levi jeans, white shirt with a cigarette pack rolled up in one sleeve, and her greased - down "ducks's ass" hairdo. During her act she grabbed a surprised woman from

Los Rios Trustee's Letter Upsets Gays

By ART CAMPOS
Bee Staff Writer

Gay students have objected to a letter written by trustee Robert B. Lynch of the Los Rios Community College District in which he called them "damn fools," "fags" and "bizarre weirdos."

Members of the Gay People's Union at Sacramento City College confronted the trustees in a meeting last night at Cosumnes River College and asked the board to censure Lynch for the remarks.

But Tom DuHain, board president, refused to allow the contents of the letter to be discussed, saying the board would not censure a trustee for expressing a written opinion.

"A member of the board may write anything he wishes," said DuHain. "The board will not get into making policy to censure a trustee's opinion or his mail."

Lynch said he was "amused and dismayed" by the reaction to the letter.

"I'm not going to have anyone censure my letters," he said. "I write what I please and to whom I please and I'm going to continue to do that."

The letter-writing incident was a result of a fashion show held at SCC Oct. 30 and 31 by a lesbian theatrical group. The show was called "Dykes on Parade."

One student, Linda Sanchez, wrote a letter to Lynch, expressing the hope that more events will be held on college campuses by gay people.

Lynch responded with the following letter:

"If I have anything to say about it we will have no more of these damn fools on any of our campus sites. I expect now the fags will ask for equal time and probably other assorted and bizarre weirdos will want to put on shows.

"As a trustee elected by taxpayers, I see my duties as setting policies to provide excellent educational opportunities for all of our citizens, not to provide meeting places for deviates.



Bee File Photo

ROBERT B. LYNCH
... letter draws fire.

"As always there is a bright side to everything — i.e. we kept a lot of lesbians off the streets for two nights running.

"I am hopeful that my opinions are not only shared by most of the citizens of this district but most of the trustees."

The gay students felt Lynch should be censured since he had made "slandorous statements" on district stationery.

But DuHain cut short the discussion, saying a board member can express an opinion on district stationery and that "one member does not speak for the entire board."

Outside the meeting room, the gay students were bitter and claimed they had been censured by DuHain.

Ka'rtikeya Mattos, a member of the Gay People's Union, said Lynch's remarks were uncalled for since the GPU is officially recognized as a campus organization and had followed all the rules in setting up the fashion show.

Trustee, gay students exchange criticisms

By Jerry Eagan

Sharp criticisms have been traded between Los Rios board member Robert Lynch and a representative of the Gay Peoples Union in separate interviews with the Express.

Lynch foresaw that "pretty soon we'll need a third series of restrooms on campus labeled 'other' " while talking about gay students and the student government at City College.

"I'm concerned about the impact that such statements might have on young gay people. It's generally somewhat painful growing up gay and comments like Lynch's stress that difficulty," Ka'rtikeya Mattos, a member and organizer of the Gay Peoples Union.

The subject of the interviews was the controversy created by Lynch's letter to Sacramento woman Linda Sanchez in which he associated lesbians on campus with "fags" and "bizarre weirdos."

Lynch's letter was written response to Sanchez's correspondence with him in which she expressed her appreciation of the production of "Dykes on Parade" at City College Oct. 30 and 31.

Lynch said in his letter:

"If I have anything to say about it we will have no more of these damn fools on any of our campus sites. I expect now the fags will ask for equal time and probably other assorted and bizarre weirdos will want to put on shows.

"As a trustee elected by the taxpayers, I see my duties as setting policies to provide excellent educational opportunities for all our citizens not to provide meeting places for deviates.

"As always there is a bright side to everything — i.e. we kept a lot of lesbians off the streets for two nights running.

"I am hopeful that my opinions are not only shared by most of the citizens of this district but most of the trustees."

As a result of the letter, a

number of gay students and supporters attended the Los Rios board meeting on Nov. 17 to ask that Lynch be censured for making slanderous statements about gay students on district stationery. But the board president refused to allow discussion of the matter, contending, "The board will not get into making policy to censure a trustee's opinion or his mail."

In an interview with the Express the day after the board meeting, Lynch expressed sentiments similar to those in the letter.

Asked why he wrote the letter, Lynch responded, "Trustees were elected to provide quality education for the sons and daughters of the district taxpayers and not provide a meeting place for deviates."

He continued, "I have no objection to deviates and weirdos meeting or playing or whatever it is they do but not at taxpayer expense."

When queried about the reaction of the students to whom he was referring, Lynch said, "I could care less."

The trustee was also outspoken about the quality of student government on the City College campus. "when 80 people vote, that's not representation, that's a mutual admiration society," he commented.

He went on to say, "I'm concerned that they have control over funds, and they represent nobody. They are meaningless non-entities — a bad joke."

Lynch said that he felt the student government was interested in only a few people but, "I am interested in the thousands, not the oddballs. I want to help the student who has come back after 20 years or who works full-time or can't attend regular hours because of a job."

He contended, "The gay students and the student government opposed the building of the parking lot for the handicapped and that tells

you something about them."

Mattos, the ombudsperson in student government, talked to the Express after the Lynch interview and gave his opinions of the statements.

"I think his mistake is in separating gay students from others," said Mattos. "Gay students are taxpayers, and they are the sons and daughters of taxpayers. They are also in a lot of cases veterans."

Mattos also answered the charges concerning student government, saying, "The phrase 'student government' is a joke. Students don't govern; they are governed."

He explained, "The district has established policy that funds from the cafeteria, vending machines and others will be administratively controlled and treated as instructional funds."

In response to the charges that student government is not representative, Mattos charged that as far as the number of voters go, Lynch is not representative of his district either.

He said, "Lynch was elected by about six or seven per cent of the eligible voters since the turnout was only twelve per cent."

Mattos also maintains that Lynch is mistaken in his allegations about the building of the parking lot. "First of all," he said, "the Gay Peoples Union had no official stand on the parking lot, and further I contend that the handicapped issue has been fabricated by individuals such as Lynch. There have been many verbal promises made regarding handicapped parking, and I've become accustomed to most verbal promises not being followed through on."

Lynch said, too, "It is ridiculous for us to get into this sexual garbage. We should stop worrying about a few gay students and starting working on the problems of the district."

At the conclusion of the interview, Lynch said, "If I'm wrong, I'll publicly apologize. I'm seldom wrong."



Photo by Scott Sommerdorf

CONTROVERSIAL MEMBER — Los Rios trustee Robert Lynch listens attentively as a number of people attending the Nov. 17 board meeting demand his censure following his controversial comments about gays. He is flanked by Chancellor Earl Klapstein.

Gays seek censure

By Barbara Deters

At least 15 outraged City College and American River gay students attended the last Los Rios board meeting to object to a letter board member Robert Lynch wrote to Sacramento woman Linda Sanchez.

Lynch's comments were aimed at a recent dramatic review at City College called "Dykes on Parade."

Both gay groups accused Lynch of writing slanderous statements when he called them "damned fools," "deviates" and "bizarre weirdos." They said that the letter also implied that the board stood behind Lynch's comments.

Both gay groups argued that the board should take some action on Lynch's letter because the last paragraph of it said, "I am hopeful that my opinions are not only shared by most of the citizens of this district, but also most of the trustees."

Steve Humphries, City College Gay Peoples Union representative, said, "Once the letter was written, at the very least, the board should make a statement that they do not endorse Lynch's statements."

But board chairman Tom DuHain would not discuss the issue, saying that any board member has the right to express his/her views to people of the community and that a member is only answerable to the electorate. He stated further that one board member's opinion does not constitute board or district policy.

Lynch, appearing amused with the attention his letter brought, commented, "I'm not going to have anyone censor my letters. I write what I please and to whom I please and I'm going to continue to do just that."

Andy Scott, American River student, said, "I'm appalled that elected officials on the board can make such biased statements in a letter sent through on district stationery and have no action taken by the board."

Ka'rtikeya Mattos, another City College Gay Peoples Union representative said Lynch's remarks were uncalled for since the GPU is officially recognized as a campus organization and had followed all the rules in setting up the show.



LOS RIOS COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Sacramento City College 1916

American River College 1955

Cosumnes River College 1970

DR. EARL L. KLAPSTEIN
Chancellor/Superintendent

November 12, 1976

Ms. Linda Sanchez

Dear Ms. Sanchez:

Thank you for your letter of November 1, 1976 regarding "Dykes on Parade."

If I have anything to say about it we will have no more of these damn fools on any of our campus sites. I expect now the fags will ask for equal time and probably other assorted and bizarre weirdos will want to put on shows.

As a trustee elected by taxpayers, I see my duties as setting policies to provide excellent educational opportunities for all of our citizens, not to provide meeting places for deviates.

As always there is a bright side to everything i.e. we kept a lot of lesbians off the streets for two nights running.

I am hopeful that my opinions are not only shared by most of the citizens of this district but also most of the trustees.

Very truly yours,

Robert B. Lynch

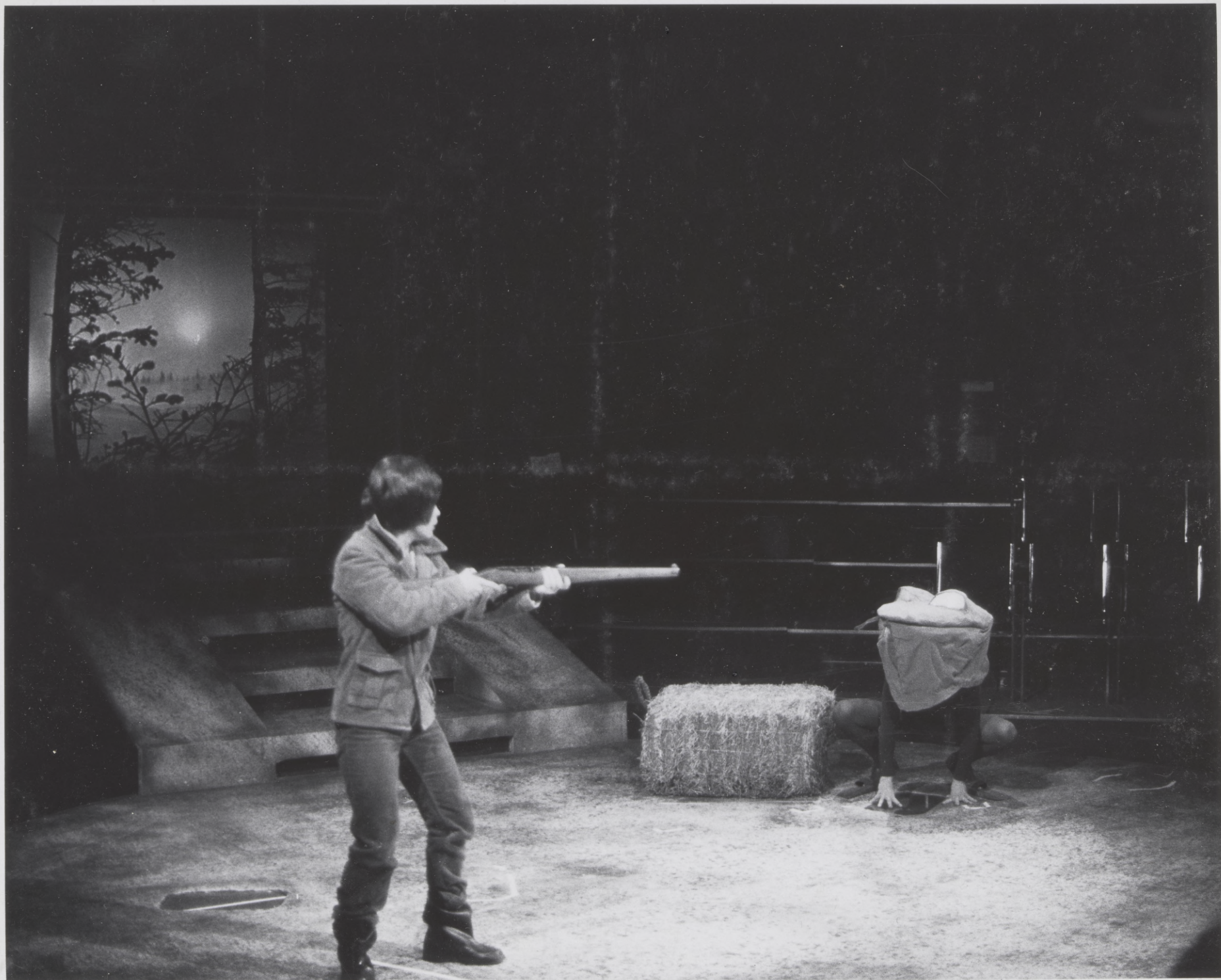
Robert B. Lynch, Member
Los Rios Board of Trustees

RBL;d

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THE FROG





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Photo: MSI/P12
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***'The Frog'* premieres at CSUS - again**

"The Frog," the latest Le Theatre Lesbien production, will return to CSUS Friday and Saturday, May 21 and 22. It first appeared on this campus in April.

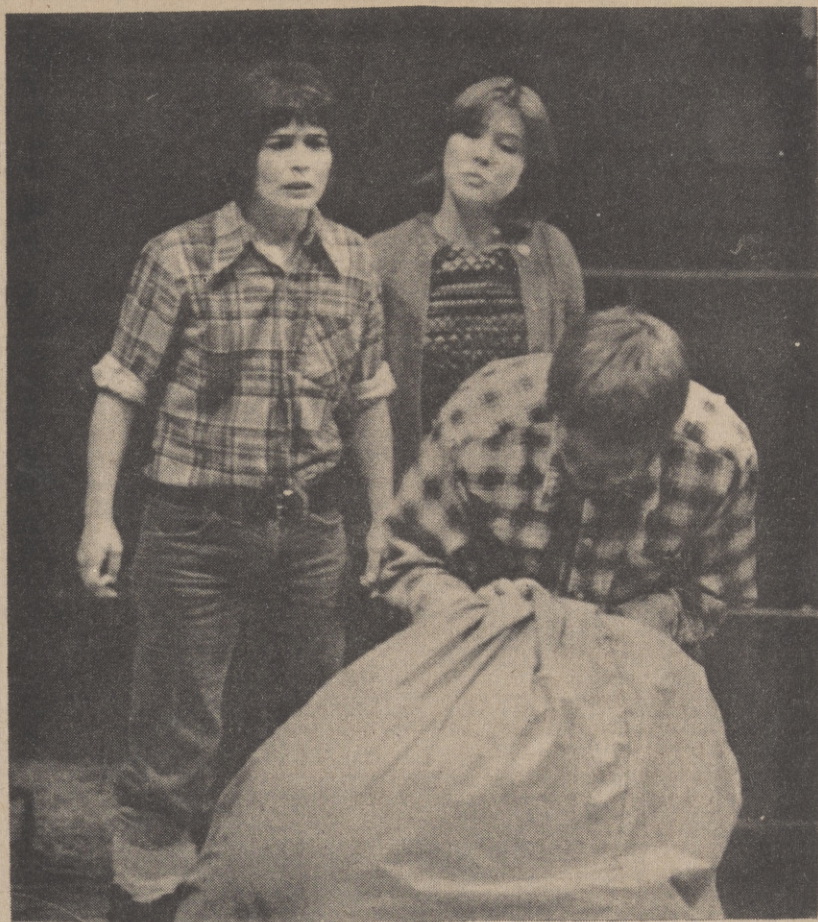
According to theatre spokesperson, Cherie Gordon, the premiere was deemed successful despite the opposition from some local groups and politicians. Gordon says "It is our most controversial production because it includes more physical contact between two women than we've ever done before."

"The Frog" is a broad parody of the film based on the D. H. Lawrence book, "The Fox." Madame Szwambi has satirized the sentimentalities, pomposities, and clinched sexual and literary assumptions which abound in Lawrence's original work. The five-act Lesbien Theatre comedy substitutes burlesque for symbolism, and employs a number of audio and visual aids to give the feeling of the passing seasons in a year.

The thematic content of "The Frog" twists the original script by dealing mainly with two women who live alone in a remote area. The development of their relationship and easy lifestyle is complicated by the appearance of a predatory frog and a man.

Le Theatre Lesbien was started in 1971 by two females, including Gordon, and one male. They performed at parties, bars and conferences until 1974. In 1976, the Theatre surfaced again with the production of "Dykes on Parade," which toured the Bay Area and played at CSUS. Madame Szwambi was responsible for writing this play also.

"The Frog" will be performed in the CSUS Playwright's Theatre at 8 p.m. both evenings. Tickets are \$2.50. A donation of \$2.50 may be paid at the door and free child care is available.



Cherie Gordon (Jesse) and Elizabeth Fisk (Alice) portray the women whose lives are interrupted by Myrene MacLaskey (Ivor) and Rana Catesbiana (the frog) in "The Frog."

Le Théâtre Lesbien

"The Frog"

by Madame Szwambi

What is lesbian theater? A Sacramento based company with the presumptuous name of "Le Theatre Lesbien" gave us a taste recently with "The Frog." The play parodied a film based on D.H. Lawrence's short novel "The Fox."

The plot of all three revolves around two lady chicken farmers and a couple of Male intruders: one human and one animal. I think you've got the picture.

The play, written by Madame Szwambi, self-proclaimed "high literary sirceress of the cosmos" was staged at Berkeley's neighborhood Live Oak Theater in June. It was simply awful.

The fault was with the script. Parody just happens to be one of the most difficult forms of art. If art is a reflection of life and parody is a reflection of art, then parody is merely a reflection of a reflection (and, in this case, of a reflection). Things can get pretty blurry at that distance, and you have to have a finely tuned ear and a sharp eye to keep reality in focus.

Unfortunately, Mme. Szwambi's perceptions run to off-color one-liners like "We can't make it without a cock" and such brilliant exchanges as "It's hard for me to hate.... You haven't tried."

I'm being particularly hard on this company because they can do better. The actors have potential. Their blocking, projection, and stage effects were more than adequate. In fact, they are quite promising, and they pushed the script just about as far as it would go in an honest attempt at entertainment.

The theater was packed on Saturday night, and I suppose women responding to the words "lesbian theater." Dykes are an oppressed class of people, formerly invisible, who are longing for accurate and illuminating art about the lesbian life-style. The only decent play that I know about dykes is "The Children's Hour" by Lillian Hellman, which is a great play but it's not even really about dykes.

The company might look to other playwrights for material and try a drama that reflects the real life economic and social struggles of lesbians or at least attempts to deal with them. Or they might develop their own material through improvisation in the manner of Lillitheater.

Cherie Gordon as Jesse and Eliza Fisk as Alice both revealed abundant stage presence, though their parts were stereotypes. Myrene MacLaskey was memorable as Ivor, the prototypical Neanderthal man. Almost everyone on stage displayed some degree of talent, but I must say that Rana Catesbiana had the last word as the Frog: "Ribbit."

TONI CHESTNUT

READERS JUMP ON "FROG" CRITIC

Dear PLEXUS:

Toni Chestnut must be full of chestnuts. Or maybe she is too bound to the rules of what is "politically correct" to just let go and laugh. Not all dykes are "longing for accurate and illuminating art about the lesbian lifestyle." Who cares whether "The Frog" was great art? We thought it was hilarious.

Sure, the characters were stilted and stereotyped to the nth degree, but as a parody "The Frog" was a roaring success. As a caricature of the melodrama of lesbian relationships we have known, we thought the play was particularly daring. As a take-off on the movie, it was great, especially when the two women jump into bed together. (We always missed that part in the film.)

And we'll admit Le Theatre Lesbien's production had its raunchy moments, but always in the context of exposing through non-malicious humor some of the most unmentionable taboos in our subculture.

Ms. Chestnut trashed the play from the hoity-toity artsy point of view, which we can understand, but think is only one alternative experience of the diverse realm of lesbian entertainment. Rather than coolly dissecting Madame Szwambi's play on its literary merits, we prefer judging it as a whole on its ability to make us laugh. We laughed so hard we even forgot to be aware of old lovers two or three rows back.

"The Children's Hour" was an agonized, heterosexist portrayal of two women accused of having a relationship. It was an awful and depressing story, and it made us feel sick. "The Frog" made us feel hopeful and happy to be laughing with a roomful of lesbians. We noticed an occasional catcall from a diehard lesbian feminist separatist defender of the politically correct, but this very heavy seriousness served to add a dimension of humor to the entire evening.

Perhaps we are not critics of Ms. Chestnut's caliber. (Last weekend we entertained a family of Mexican jumping beans for fun). But we will continue to recognize the need to exercise one's sense of humor.

Double ribbit to you, Ms. Chestnut.

Maureen Abajian
Janice Kendrick
Oakland

To the Editors:

I found the review of Le Theatre Lesbien's play, "The Frog," to be poorly written and inaccurate. She begins by saying "It was simply awful," followed by "Parody just happens to be one of the most difficult forms of art." But she doesn't go on to say how as parody she found it "awful," rather, she says "Dykes are an oppressed class of people . . . who are longing for accurate and illuminating art about the lesbian life-style." "The company might look to other playwrights for material and try a drama that reflects real life economic and social struggles of lesbians . . ."

"The Frog" is a parody of one of the few movies about Lesbians ever to appear on a widespread commercial scale. The movie itself is "simply awful," an unrealistic, destructive and stereotyped description of Lesbians. The play, by burlesquing such a movie, provided a strong statement against such stereotypes.

I, and the other Lesbians in the audience — if laughter is any sign — found the play hilarious, refreshing, cathartic and strengthening. Not all statements about "real life" need to conform to one picture of "economic and social struggles" in order to be important and political.

Sincerely,

S. Leigh Star
San Francisco

CRITIC REPLIES

Sorry I offended those who liked "The Frog." So it goes. The problem was that I hadn't seen the film, and I should have said so. Most parody depends on comparison and cannot stand alone. Perhaps the test of parody is whether or not it works on two levels — on its own and as a take-off. To me, "The Frog" lacked integrity, and most of the women I talked to who hadn't seen the film were similarly bored and unamused.

The sentences quoted by Ms. Star are taken out of context and appear in the review in separate paragraphs. I thought the jokes were awful.

I disagree with Maureen and Janice that "The Children's Hour" is heterosexist. The character of Martha is brilliantly drawn, though her awakening and subsequent suicide seem speeded up for the sake of drama. Actually Hellman's play is not about lesbians or lesbianism, but rather "The Big Lie" technique of smearing and ruining people. As a tragedy, it's literally supposed to make you sick with pity and fear. It's also supposed to make you think.

P.S. Me, politically correct? You must be kidding.

CHESTNUT



Sex parody gives audience laugh

By Michael Williams

Last Sunday Le Theatre Lesbian performers presented a light comedy that offered viewers a healthy opportunity to laugh at sex roles, attitudes and taboos in today's society.

"The Frog," a broad and shameless parody of the film based on D. H. Lawrence's novel, *The Fox*, played to nearly 100 people on the California State University, Sacramento campus.

The play related the story of two women: Alice, a pure, wholesome girl played by Eliza Fisk and Jesse, a caring but intensely sexual female played by Cherie Gordon.

Their secluded life serves them well (except for Jesse's unfulfilled urges) until Jesse hires a lumbering macho man, Ivor, played by Myrene Maclasky.

Sensitive Alice cannot stand the crude stranger hulking about doing his chores, and she begs Jesse to fire him. When Jesse approaches Ivor to dismiss him, he grunts, "I love. Let's screw." Jesse is insulted, but a hilarious scene develops when Ivor uses his macho lust to attract the frustrated Jesse. The parody is obvious.

Problems arise because the uncaring Ivor knows he can seduce Jesse at any time simply by caressing her elbows. She can't resist the brute and agrees to marry him rather than accept a life of solitary sex made necessary by the ever-pure Alice.

When Alice learns of Jesse's marriage plans, she becomes very morose and dejected, which hurts Jesse and makes her feel guilty.

Further complications exist because Jesse is tormented by her superego (Jeruscha Maelak) which makes it impossible for her to enjoy any sexual feelings without extreme guilt.

humorous description of how the women in the audience should be embarrassed and the men hopeful of seeing more sex. She adds, to the audience's delight, that the kiss must be one of "European origin."

Once again Jesse gives in to her sexual urges, and the couple are united amidst dark lights and cleverly exaggerated moans and groans.

Throughout the play, the two women share the work of raising chickens, but they find a huge frog enjoys eating the chickens and also devours the traps they set for it.

The amphibian (played by Rana Catesbiana) was most elaborately costumed, complete with huge frog head and glowing eyes.

Ivor returns and demands his woman

and immediate sexual gratification.

This time, however, Jesse is fulfilled by the loving relationship with Alice, and both women demand to be left alone. Ivor cannot believe his sexual prowess is second to a woman's love.

To get rid of the persistent Ivor, the two women threaten to discuss intellectual theories in front of him. That is too much for the thug, and he leaves, denouncing "homo-sex."

Things are back to normal, but the predatory frog is still preying on the chickens.

In the final scene the two women are hunting the frog for a final showdown when Ivor reappears with a mysterious package. He assures the nervous women that he has returned only to prove he doesn't need them and their "homo-sex"

because he has a new mate.

Ivor opens the package and reveals the frog as his new mate.

In an extremely clever turning of the tables, the two "liberated" women show their own prejudices when they are disgusted by the thought of Ivor and the frog as lovers.

It's all right, though, Ivor insists, because the frog is female.

A slide show and clever lighting contributed to the effectiveness of the presentation of the well written play, which provided an enjoyable, enlightening evening and a rare and honest chance to laugh at some very serious subjects in our society today.

The group plans to perform another play some time in June on the City College campus.

In a very funny scene, her superego convinces her to renounce all sexual feelings and advises her to become pure, but warns against reading the Bible because some parts might be "too stimulating for a degenerate like you."

So Jesse decides to call off the marriage while Ivor is away visiting relatives. She tells Alice, who miraculously recovers from her depression.

In a touching scene, the two women finally admit their deep love for each other. As they experience their first kiss, the narrator (Ebet) runs through a

Le Theatre Lesbien

'The Frog' hops onstage

Le Theatre Lesbien is back with more frolic in their latest production, "The Frog," a broad and shameless parody of the screen version of D. H. Lawrence's "The Fox."

High literary sorceress of the cosmos, Madame Swzambi (author of "Dykes On Parade") has brilliantly satirized the sentimentalities, pomposities, and cliched sexual and literary assumptions which abound in Lawrence's original work. A comedy, "The Frog," substitutes burlesque for symbolism, and employs a number of audio and visual technical aids to enhance audience response and participation. Inventively staged, well directed and performed, "The Frog" is a light, witty, swiftly moving exercise in satiric lunacy.

The thematic content of "The Frog" is very simple. It deals mainly with two women who live alone in a remote area. The ease of their life together and the development of their relationship is invaded by the introduction of alien beings: a predatory Frog and a man. The play treats the multi-dimensional tensions and conflicts which naturally arise from this intrusion with an enormous lack of subtlety, and wit.

"The Frog," sponsored by National Collegiate Players, premieres April 16 and 17 in the Playwright's Theatre on the CSUS campus. Curtain rises at 8 p.m. and there is a \$2.50 donation at the door. Free child care will be provided.

Reviews

THE FROG

drawing by Lynne Ohlson



Sallie Wright

Le Théâtre Lesbien is back and with more frolic in their latest production, "The Frog", a broad and shameless parody of the screen version of D.H. Lawrence's, "The Fox". Madame Swzambi (author of Dykes on Parade) has brilliantly satirized in this recent play the sentimentalities, pomposities, and cliched sexual and literary assumptions which abound in Lawrence's original work. Inventively staged, well directed and performed, "The Frog" is a light, witty, swiftly moving exercise in satiric lunacy. The thematic content of "The Frog" is very simple. It deals with two women who live alone in a remote area. The development of their relationship is invaded by the introduction of alien beings; a predatory Frog and a man. The play treats this intrusion with an enormous lack of subtlety and wit. That's what makes it funny. You really must go see it.

Appearing April 16 & 17 At C.S.U.S.
Playwright's Theatre 8 p.m.

'The Frog' plays at State

Le Theatre Lesbian will present its second performance of "The Frog" Saturday and Sunday at 8 p.m. in the Playwright's Theatre at California State University, Sacramento.

The parody of the film version of D.H. Lawrence's *The Fox* was written by local playwright Madame Szwambi and deals with a relationship between two women who live contentedly in a secluded area until their lives are invaded by a predatory frog and a man.

Szwambi, who is described as "the high literary sorceress of the cosmos" has used the Lawrence story to create "a broad and shameless parody that satirizes the sentimentalities, pomposities and cliched sexual assumptions in Lawrence's work."

A \$2.50 donation will be asked at the door. Child care will be available.

THE SACRAMENTO BEE

Sunday, May 22, 1977

Theatre Lesbien Will Present 'The Frog' Tonight

THE FROG, an original comedy by Madame Szwambi parodying D. H. Lawrence's novel, *The Fox*, will be staged

under the direction of Roberta Dodge by Le Theatre Lesbien of Sacramento tonight at 8 o'clock in the Playwright's Theater at California State Uni-

versity, Sacramento. Lawrence's story, made into a movie, is about a male invasion of the lives of two women living on a farm in Canada.

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DRAGHET





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HOMOPHOBIA





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Gibboas RISING

APRIL 1978
V.1 N.3

A Feminist News Collective
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SACTO & ELSEWHERE
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Homophobia

On Friday, April 14th, in recognition of Gay Awareness Week at Sacramento City College, Le Theatre Lesbien will premiere "Homophobia," a short and sassy comedy. Two performances will be given at 7:30p.m. and 8:30p.m. in the Little Theatre. Tickets are \$1.50 at the door. There are no advance sales. Because of limited staff, Le Theatre Lesbien regrets child care will not be provided.

As part of Gay Pride Week there will be another performance at the playwright's Theatre, C.S.U.S, 8 p.m., Friday, April 21st.

"Homophobia," A one act farcial comedy, written by Cherie Gordon and La Marc Duchamps is a documented Lesbian account of past and present her-story turned into herlarity. The plot is simple: two lesbian mothers battle the forces of evil--St. Paul and Anita Bryant-- who are using Christianity to further their careers, There are many surprises throughout the play-DON'T MISS IT!

Play and dance top off Gay Awareness Week

Gay Awareness Week continues at City College with a workshop tonight, a play tomorrow night and a dance Saturday night.

"Minority of the Third Kind" and "Are All Gays White and Male?" are the topics set for tonight's workshop at 7:30 in L101. La Paula Turner will act as facilitator of the session.

A one-act farcical comedy, "Homophobia," will be performed by La Theatre Lesbien twice tomorrow night in the Little Theatre at 7:30 and 8:30.

In last week's Express headline the performance was incorrectly announced as premiering last Friday although the story itself carried the correct date.

Written by Cherie Gordon and La

Marc Duchamps, "Homophobia" deals with two Lesbian mothers who battle the opponents of gay rights, including Anita Bryant.

Tickets for the play will be available at the door for \$1.50.

Live music by the band Six Percent will be featured at Saturday night's dance marking the conclusion of Gay Awareness Week.

The dance will run from 8:30 to 12:30 p.m. in the Student Center. Admission is \$2. Tickets may be purchased in advance at the Business Office or at the door.

Gay Awareness Week is being sponsored by the City College Gay People's Union.

Lesbian farce to premiere here tomorrow night

"Homophobia" will premiere next Friday night at the Little Theatre in recognition of Gay Awareness Week.

The one-act farcical comedy, written by Cherie Gordon and La Marc Duchamps, will be performed by Le Theatre Lesbien at 7:30 and 8:30 p.m.

Tickets will be available at the door for \$1.50.

The plot deals with two lesbian mothers who battle the opponents of gay rights, in-

cluding Anita Bryant.

It turns into a comical struggle between the lesbians and opposing forces.

Sponsored by the Gay People's Union, the play is one of a series of week-long events on campus.

Le Theatre Lesbien will give one more performance of "Homophobia" at the California State University of Sacramento, to end its six-year career.

"Homophobia," a short and provocative comedy presented by "Le Theatre Lesbien," will be presented Friday at 8 p.m. in the Playwrights Theatre. Admission will be \$1.50 at the door.

Strategically OK Lesbian Play Fails As Theater

By Alfred Kay
Bee Reviewer

TITLES OF PLAYS can be informative or provocative; never should they confuse and compromise dramatic objectives or alienate the interested and sympathetic.

It is surprising, then, that Le Theatre Lesbien chose for the title of its new production on the California State University, Sacramento, campus "Cowdykes at the Lavender Corral." For that is the sort of thing which could keep away those individuals with honest or dishonest opinions that homosexual themes and phrases should not be offered in a public theater or a public anything. It could also alienate the more liberal persons who would interpret the title as high or low camp and therefore demeaning to a minority group.

Cherie Gordon, co-author with La Marc de Champ of this production, however, explains or rationalizes this by stating that such words should be brought into the open and therefore made to seem "as ludicrous as they are." First, she means, the shock and then the laughter and then perhaps a sense of proportion. "Some will always cheer on Archie Bunker," Gordon says, "but many will see him for what he really is."

So despite the "Cowdykes" and the "Lavender Corral," members of this theatrical company founded eight years ago insist that their present production is dedicated to "the presentation of lesbians with positive models with whom they can identify" (as cumbersome a phrase, as we shall

see, as a good part of the dialogue on the CSUS stage). Other objectives include the education of the general public "by producing plays about lesbian issues" and "to attain an excellent standard of production by using a professional approach to theater."

A reviewer cannot quarrel with this; such theses would apply to theatrical works initiated by any group with parochial causes — from vegetarianism, say, to the single tax. Besides, a farcical, "cowdykes" sort of approach to serious themes has been traditional and effective all the way from commedia dell'arte, which exposed corruption in the 16th century, to the San Francisco Mime Troupe, which exposes corruption in the 20th century as they see it.

IN TERMS OF strategy, then, Le Theatre Lesbien cannot be faulted; in dramatic terms, the results cannot be accepted. Satirical incident demands bite and satirical dialogue requires bark, and "Cowdykes" has neither. Playwrights, actresses and director have substituted loud noise and exaggerated movements for high spirits and immature jokes for the sort of provocative humor both theme and objectives demand.

Perhaps, the most telling failure, at least as one observer sees it, is the fact that a good part of the humor that remains is based on names and incidents familiar only to this specialized theatrical company and the mainly specialized audience which attended Friday night's performance. Yes,

there was laughter, a great deal of it, but at the "in" sort of lines an outside sort of person finds puzzling. This does not constitute professional theater per se, nor does it "educate the general public by producing plays about lesbian issues."

"Cowdykes" has its moments, though. There are interesting projections on a screen which create an appropriate mood — a map of Nevada pointing to a place (one assumes the location of the play) called "Bawdy Badlands" and slides of Western towns and Western bars. There is an evocative sound track of passing trains and a delightful folk singer named Laurie Campbell to fill in the background and ambiance.

ALSO ON THE credit side are some fine costumes, including the lavender Western outfit of marshal Pat Pitts (played with a relative level of competence by M. Lavelle Nelson). There is a fine lavender horse, too, who reads in bed with horse-sized

glasses (but passes up "National Velvet" on the shelf). And there is a character named Token Straight, also played with some measure of quality by somebody named Eliza, who coincidentally (or maybe not) looks like Jane Fonda and stands on a literal soap box and observes that "liberal guilt is a heavy burden to carry."

Whatever humor or message could have been realized by these characters are never developed, however, and are lost in blatant and self-indulgent acting and script which transcend farce or even slapstick. Any valuable point to be made never emerges beyond a small circle of spectators.

One would think that if members of Le Theatre Lesbien saw the same play on the themes of vegetarianism or the single tax would find it dull indeed, second-rate theater and maybe demeaning to the cause.

(The production will be repeated Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m. in the Playwrights' Theater at CSUS.)

mom... GUESS What...!

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Meet the 'Cowdykes at The Lavender Corral'

Saddle up, podners. Le Theatre Lesbien wants you to grab your hats and guns and meet the "Cowdykes At The Lavender Corral" at 8 p.m. on September 7, 8, 14, 15 in the Playwright's Theatre on the C.S.U.S. campus.

"Cowdykes", a farcical melodrama, by La Marc DuChamps and Cherie Gordon, satirizes various stereotypes which abound in the classic western. Well directed and staged, "Cowdykes" is an action-filled, quick-moving, witty trip through the Old West with its images of bar dykes, a talking horse (female, of course), a U.S. feminist marshal, and the town's villainous, no-count, Samuel Slime — Mayor of Bawdy Badlands. The plot is traditionally melodramatic — the forces of feminist righteousness versus the evils of opposition (a not uncommon theme for modern-day feminists).

Under the direction of Elizabeth Priest, this comical offering promises to become yet another in a series of successful productions for which Le Theatre Lesbien is becoming known. With such prior credits as "Dykes On Parade," "The Frog," and "Homophobia," Le Theatre Lesbien is shooting for another successful hit with "Cowdykes."

Don't miss the opportunity to see "Cowdykes At The Lavender Corral." So get into your best cowdyke drag, sisters and brothers, and prepare to spend an evening with Le Theatre Lesbien in the wild, wild West. "Cowdykes" is rated P.U. — politically unsound or parents unaccompanied (by children). \$3 donation at the door. No advance sales. Because of an increase in room rentals, Le Theatre Lesbien regrets that no child care will be provided at the play.



Photos by Mary Krause

MOM... GUESS WHAT...!

ISSUE NO. 9 • JULY, 1979

Sacto's First Gay Pride Parade Is Big Success

by Bill Spiller

Sacramento's First Annual Gay Pride Parade, held June 17, was definitely a success. With gay participation estimated at 800-1,000, we marched from the Way Station, down I street, to J street, to Capitol Park where the rally was held. The theme of "It's About Time" resounded repeatedly during the day.

Although some negative response came from members of the gay community, largely because they questioned whether enough gay people would support the parade, the objectives of "representing pride in our community and in ourselves as human beings" were fulfilled.

Keynote speakers included Leonard Matlovich, candidate for county supervisor in San Francisco, and Theresa Corrigan, director of the Rape Crisis Center. Matlovich brought messages of not being afraid to come out of the closet. "Society is not afraid of our vices", he stated. "They are afraid of our virtues." Corrigan stated, "Being gay is not political, but being oppressed is . . . and only through our physical presence and voices united together will our oppression be heard."

Other speakers during the day events were Gary Miller, Human Rights Commissioner; James Graham, Editor of MOM . . . GUESS WHAT . . .!; Freda Smith, Pastor of MCC; and Audrey Mertz, of NOW. Le Theatre Lesbien performed "A Skit"—a satirical examination of the ways in which factionalism divides and weakens the community in its efforts for political and social change.

Sacramento City Councilwoman Anne Rudin, one of the many legislators and political figures who were invited but unable to attend the rally, sent the following message: "I regret that I cannot join you for the parade and rally, but I want to express my support of your efforts to insure for all human beings the right of equal opportunity for jobs, education, housing, and choice of individual life style."



MOM... GUESS WHAT...!

The Gang That Wouldn't Shoot Straight

by Madame Szwambi

Le Theatre Lesbien, Sacramento's only lesbian theatre group, has a new production **Cowdykes** at the **Lavender Corral**, scheduled for sometime in September. **Cowdykes**, a farcical melodrama by Cherie Gordon and Marc DuChamps, satirizes various stereotypes in the classic western milieu. Under the direction of Ebet Priest, this sprightly theatrical offering promises to become yet another in a series of successful productions for which Le Theatre Lesbien is becoming widely known in the Sacramento community. Biting, irreverent and well-produced, **Cowdykes** is expected to inaugurate an



auspicious local gay theatre season.

Le Theatre Lesbien is a unique production company founded in 1971 by Cherie Gordon and Matty One Person. Its chief objective was to provide cultural and politically relevant entertainment for lesbians. The troupe developed a commedia del arte style in expressing its views about the oppressive enemies of homosexuality.

The group began to attract a loyal and enthusiastic following and soon acquired new members, writing, staging, directing, and performing such epic dramas as **The Homebrontosaurus** and **The Victorian Affair** or **Prince Albert's Last Fuck**. Le Theatre Lesbien found its ever increasing audience on college campuses and, naturally, from among the receptive and appreciative patrons of

Sacramento's gay bars.

The group disbanded in 1974 after a production called **From Lesbos to Homophobia** and did not reassemble until 1976 when its principal architects, Gordon and One Person, returned from a year's study in Australia. While abroad, they sharpened their dramatic and creative skills and began to develop a more subtle and sophisticated approach to their craft. When they returned from "Down Under," they sought to resurrect the local theatre and expand its scope. They were anxious to reach an even wider audience.

Accordingly, they recruited the literary services of Madame Szwambi, a local ghost writer who had been skulking about the academic scene for years, stealthily churning out other people's compositions and term papers. Madame Szwambi, happy to be, for once, fairly paid for her labors, obligingly provided them with a script for a gay fashion revue entitled **Dykes on Parade**. Despite the fact that **Dykes**, with its cast of 19, was an ambitious undertaking for a small group trying to stage a revival, the show enjoyed much popular acclaim and was met with standing ovations both here and in Berkeley. Le Theatre Lesbien was back in business, bigger and better than ever.

Dykes was followed by **The Frog**, a broad parody of D.H. Lawrence's grim little novella, **The Fox**. This production was also well received both locally and in Berkeley. Finally, in May of 1978, **Homophobia**, a short, bawdy comedy written by Gordon and DuChamps, was performed on local campuses in celebration of Gay Awareness Week.

The future of Le Theatre Lesbien depends, of course, upon the kind of support and encouragement it receives from the gay community. It is an innovative, restless group, unafraid to take risks, predicated on a principled commitment to the rights of gay women and men everywhere, and dedicated to the idea that humor is a responsible influence which informs, sensitizes, and helps to heal.

(Watch for dates, times, and place of **Cowdykes** at the **Lavender Corral** in the September issue of MOM . . . GUESS WHAT . . . !)

SUTTERTOWN

NEWS

*Sacramento's
other newspaper*



Vol. V, No. 13

1800½ L St. Sacramento, California

Sept. 8 - Sept. 21, 1979



Cherie Gordon (left) and Babe Hedgebush will be appearing in the Old West classic, "Cowdykes at the Lavender Corral", when the Theatre Lesbien presents the tale in the CSUS Playwrights Theatre on September 7th, 8th, 14th and 15th at 8 p.m. Donation at the door is \$3. Included among the characters are such Western favorites as bar dykes, a talking female horse, a feminist U.S. Marshall, and a villainous mayor, Samuel Slime.

Arts



Photo by Gary Reyes

'Cowdykes at the Lavender Corral, will play one more weekend, Sept. 14 and 15. The satire takes

place in the Bawdy Badlands, where the town's women try to win their rights.

'Cowdykes' entertains but needs more mass appeal

CHARLES MOORE
staff writer

Cowdykes at the Lavender Corral, which opened Friday in the Playwrights Theater, is an all female production. It is written by women, La Marc du Champ and Cherie Gordon, directed by a woman, Elizabeth Priest, and has an entirely female cast.

It is on the surface a melodrama. The characters, as in most melodramas, are stereotypical representations of various people in our society.

The difference between this show and most melodramas is that this production deals with the problems of gay women in our society and the issues to which they feel they must address themselves.

The production attempts this

Authors La Marc du Champ and Cherie Gordon should perhaps try in future pieces not to browbeat the audience so much with their points, as valid as they may be. Admittedly, political satire is one of the hardest styles of playwrighting. It's too easy for someone to become overzealous in their eagerness to put their views across.

But all good theater, as with all other forms of art, is good because it strikes some universal chord in those who observe or participate in it.

Great playwrights make their points through involving the audience with the characters and their problems. Thus, if the audience has sympathized with the character and his problems, they may begin to see the authors'

intent is to do shows strictly for the gay and or feminist audience, then the group is already succeeding, and more power to it.

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'Cowdykes'

"Cowdykes," a farcical melodrama, is being presented by Le Theatre Lesbien, a touring Sacramento troupe, at 8 p.m. tomorrow and Saturday at Live Oak Theater, Berkeley.

Cowpoking Fun at Feminism

by Chris Orr

Cowdykes at the Lavender Corral
—La Theatre Lesbien; Live Oak Theatre, Berkeley

The proscenium stage of Live Oak Theatre is not the likeliest place to experiment with theatre. But, interestingly, the traditional form of the melodrama lends itself to some audience participation and *La Theatre Lesbien* used it to step over the fourth wall and poke some satiric fun at modern feminist mores. What better way to involve the audience than to get them hissing and cheering and voting(!) for the characters — though we were all curiously silent when the heroine Patricia A. Pitts did a mid-play poll: "How many homo-, hetero-, bi-, or trans- sexuals are represented? Hmmm," she tells the cast, "They're all asexuals in this audience."

These eleven women from Sacramento blew into town for a couple of weekends and managed to offend everyone! And as Robin Tyler so neatly put it, "If I offended anyone, you needed it!" The instrument of their mischief was a "sleazy, slick, sapphic satire" called "Cowdykes at the Lavender Corral" written by Cherie Gordon and La Marc Duchamps, which takes aim at any number of

stereotypes within the lesbian feminist community. This is a case when even the bad shots become winners, because the laughs hit the bullseye every time.

We've wanted a dyke western out here for a while, and here it came galloping from Sacto. With characters the likes of Bett Butch, Tooloose La Tits (aka Toulouse la Douce), Token Straight, and our heroine, Pat Pitts, US Marshall from California, to heal the plight of the women of Bawdy Badlands. The villain, Samuel Slime, spares no niceties in his portrayal.

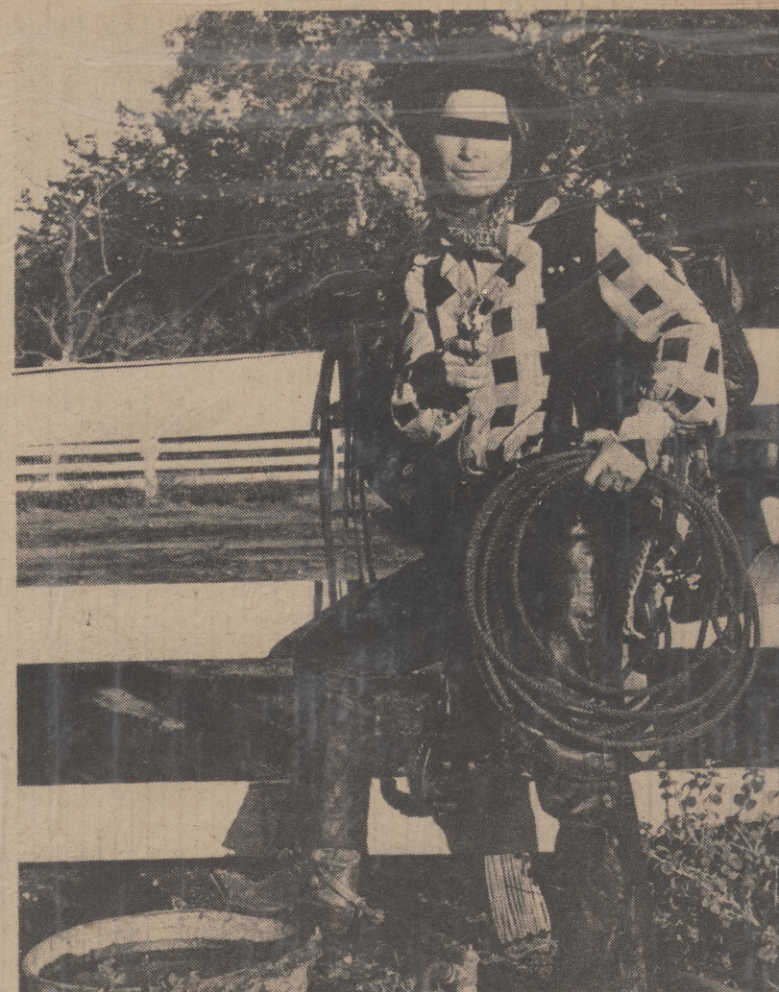
The cast of Cowdykes, while certainly stereotyped and marvelously (groan) in character throughout the show, are satisfyingly complex enough to go through some changes. Bett is a "stompin' butch" and stands to learn the value of keeping your pistol cool. Jeritol Judy, a "senior lezzie" discovers her own personal power; and even Pat Pitts—the gilded tongue of glittering, strong, star-studded heroines—talks too much sometimes. As in all good melodrama, the villain is dashed, the heroine is dashing, and the cast is pitted against a crisis of metaphoric dimensions.

The tension of the play, and its humor, lie in its social commentary. This in part relies on the political savvy of the audience and

our willingness to laugh at ourselves. *La Theatre Lesbien* certainly provided a catchy production vehicle. The costumes (Mary Kouklis), were worth watching, if the characters seemed a bit much. Especially notable was the outfit of Ms Edna, the talking horse (Ms Fritz/Jackie Weiss) who had a very funny pop-eyed horse-face mask. The shining lavender costume of valiant Pat Pitts, a renowned rhetorician and heroine of words rather than bullets, was dazzling and quite equalled her Dudley Do-Right — direct-to-the-audience delivery.

In fact, the entire cast threw themselves with glee into the task of overacting. Token Straight did a good wide-eyed clean type who truly stands up for her gay sisters, though admittedly out of her heavy liberal guilt (ooh, ow). Tooloose la Tits has good common sense though not much book learnin', "I don't understand Pitts too much, but I sure like to watch that mouth move."

There were flaws — the taped narration was largely inaudible and the musical numbers were a little weak. But overall the play and the players afforded a few good laughs at some bad jokes which got me thinking that we all need some, ahem, tasteless, social satire to clean out the system sometimes.



WHO WAS THAT COWDYKE??

photo courtesy Le Theatre Lesbien

The play has a non-violent solution to the oppression of Sam Slime which sits well as an ending to the story. Yet, the final honoring of the feisty Bett Butch who dared to fight Slime physically (though she was trounced) also rings true and

"politically correct." Perhaps this production will prod a few more of those dyke westerns out of the closet so we'll see some more controversial show-downs at the Lavender Corral.

